

Remarks

The Office Action mailed June 7, 2004 has been carefully considered.

The present invention is directed towards a SAP wherein a parameter for the continuous polymerization process is varied by increasing and decreasing the parameter in a *recurring pattern* during the polymerization.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite regarding recitation of the term “parameter.” Applicants respectfully submit that the term “parameter” is clearly defined in the specification on page 10, second paragraph, which states that “[a]ccording to the invention, at least one parameter biasing the polymerization is varied according to a recurring pattern in this continuous process.” Further, the specification discloses on pages 10 and 11 a plurality of parameters (a-f) that may be varied simultaneously or at different times throughout polymerization.

The Office Action also rejects Claims 1 and 6-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dahmen (US Pat. No. 5,712,316). As discussed in the response to the previous Office Action, Dahmen does not teach or suggest a continuous polymerization process wherein a parameter of the continuous polymerization is varied in a recurring pattern, as claimed in the present application. More specifically, the present invention requires that a parameter of the polymerization process be increased and decreased in a recurring pattern, which means that the parameter is increased and decreased more than once. For example, a parameter such as the crosslinking agent is increased, then decreased, then increased again, and then decreased again during the process to create a recurring pattern. Dahmen, at best, discloses a conventional

variation in which a parameter may be increased or decreased, but there is no teaching of a recurring pattern wherein the parameter is increased and decreased more than once.

In view of the forgoing, independent claim 1 is patentable over Dahmen. Dependent claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 are patentable for the same reasons regarding independent claim 1.

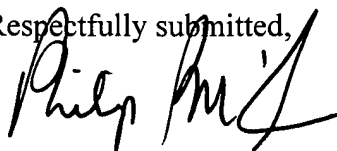
The Office Action also rejects claims 1-3, 5-15 and 17-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Dahmen (US Pat. No. 5,712,316) and states on page 4, paragraph 8, that “[t]he difference between the present claims and Dahmen is the requirement in the present claims wherein the powdered crosslinked polymer composition is made by continuous polymerization process ‘wherein a parameter of the continuous polymerization process is varied by *increasing and decreasing the parameter in a recurring pattern*, during the polymerization process.’ ” (emphasis added). Applicants respectfully submit that this statement in the Office Action acknowledges that Dahmen does not teach increasing and decreasing a parameter in a recurring pattern, which is contrary to the Office Action’s rejection of the claims on the basis that they are anticipated by Dahmen, as discussed above.

Nevertheless, Applicants maintain that Dahmen, at best, discloses a conventional variation in which a parameter may be increased and decreased but there is no teaching or suggestion of a recurring pattern wherein the parameter is increased or decreased more than once, as required by the claims of the present application. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 13, and 25 are patentable over Dahmen. Dependent claims 2, 3, 5-12, 14, 15, and 17-24 are patentable for the same reasons regarding the independent claims.

Applicants acknowledge the allowance of claim 26.

Based on the forgoing remarks, allowance of the other claims in the application is respectfully requested. If any issues remain unresolved, applicants would welcome the opportunity for a telephone interview to expedite allowance and issue.

Respectfully submitted,



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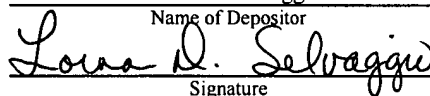
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